



Representations of the Caucasus between the XVIIIth and the XXth centuries

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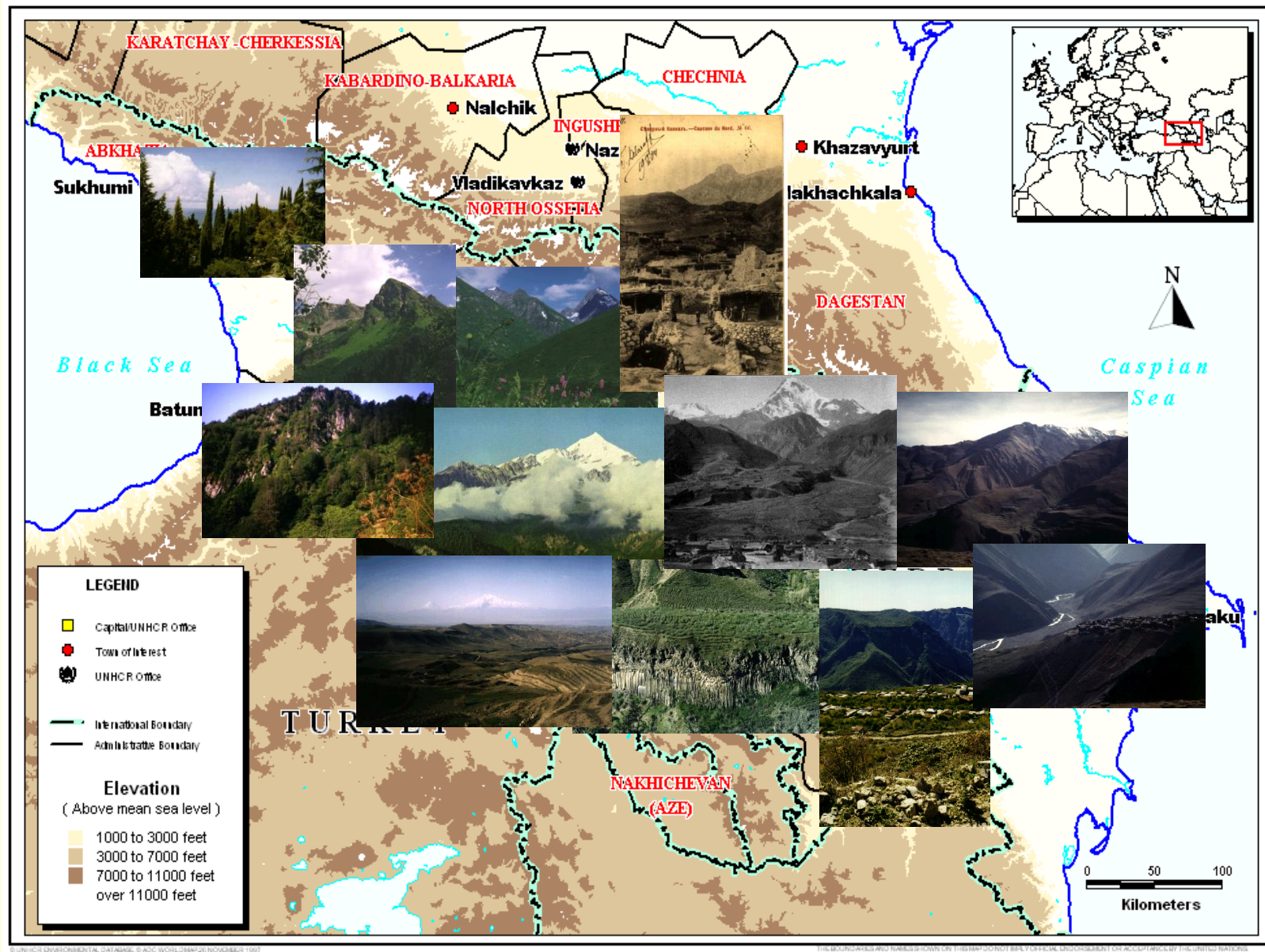


Fig. 1. The localization map of the Caucasus. Source: <http://sunsite.informatik.rwth-aachen.de>,
 photographs: M. Frolova

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1. The “discovery” of the Caucasus



Fig. 2. Fragment of the map extracted from the book of Jean Chardin *Journal du voyage du Chevalier de Chardin en Perse et aux Indes Orientales par la Mer Noire et par la Colchide*, Lyon, 1686-1687.



Fig. 3. I. Aivazovsky. *Descent of Noa from the Ararat Mountain*, 1889

2. Invention of the Caucasian landscape (1)

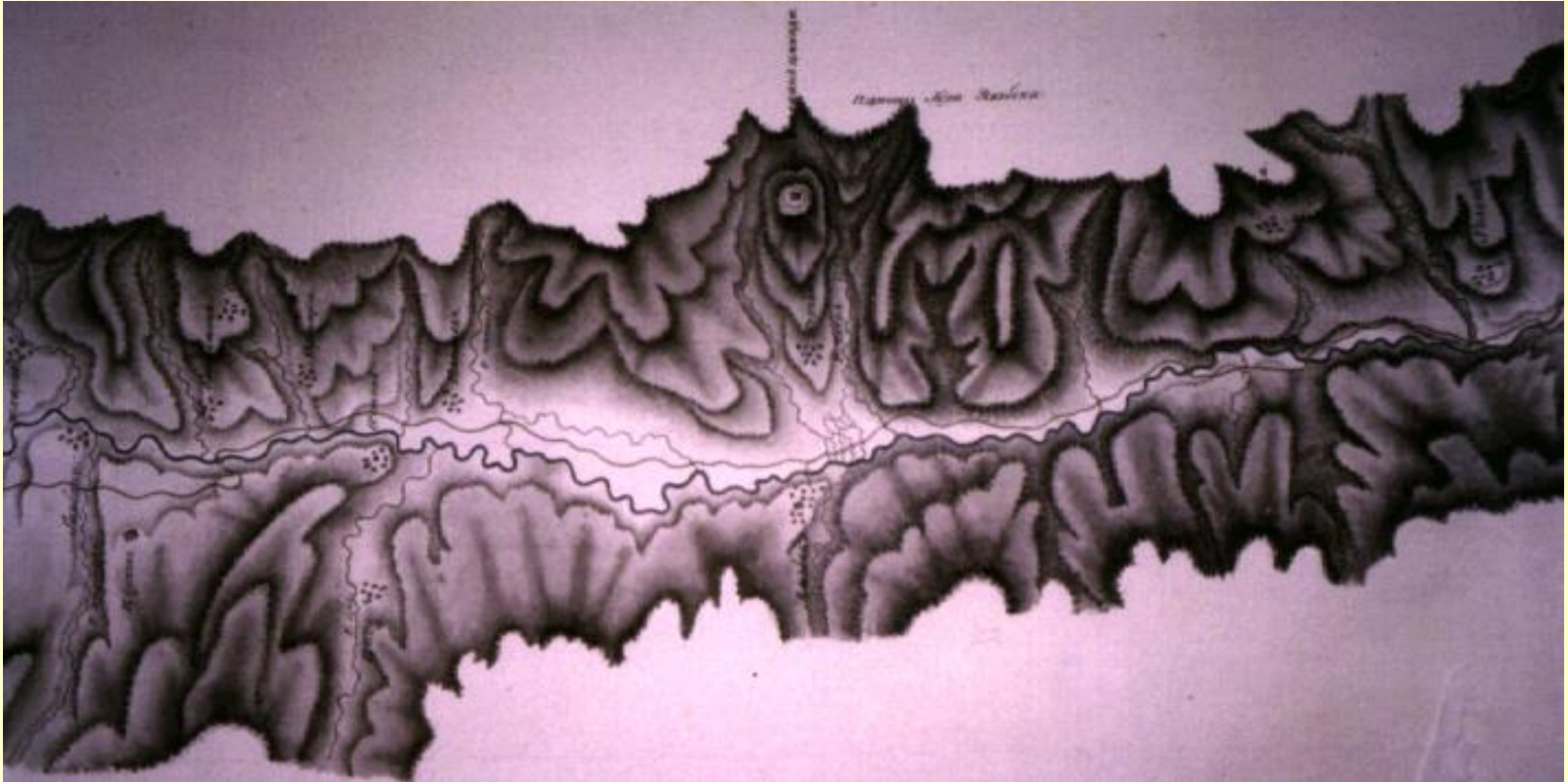


Fig. 5. Military representation of the Caucasus. Fragment of the plan of the Military Road of Georgia, author: Colonel Rottiers, 1820.

2. Invention of the Caucasian landscape (2)



Fig. 6. The warlike Caucasians.
Gregoire Gagarine *Lesguiens en expédition*, Coll. in-folio *Le Caucase pittoresque*, Paris, 1847.



Fig. 7. M.Yu. Lermontov *Shoot-out in the Daghestan mountains*, 1840-1841.

2. Invention of the Caucasian landscape (3)



Fig. 8. Tourist representation. *View of the hotel and of Piatigorsk*, engraving of K.I. Beggrov after drawing of I. Bernardtsi, 1834.

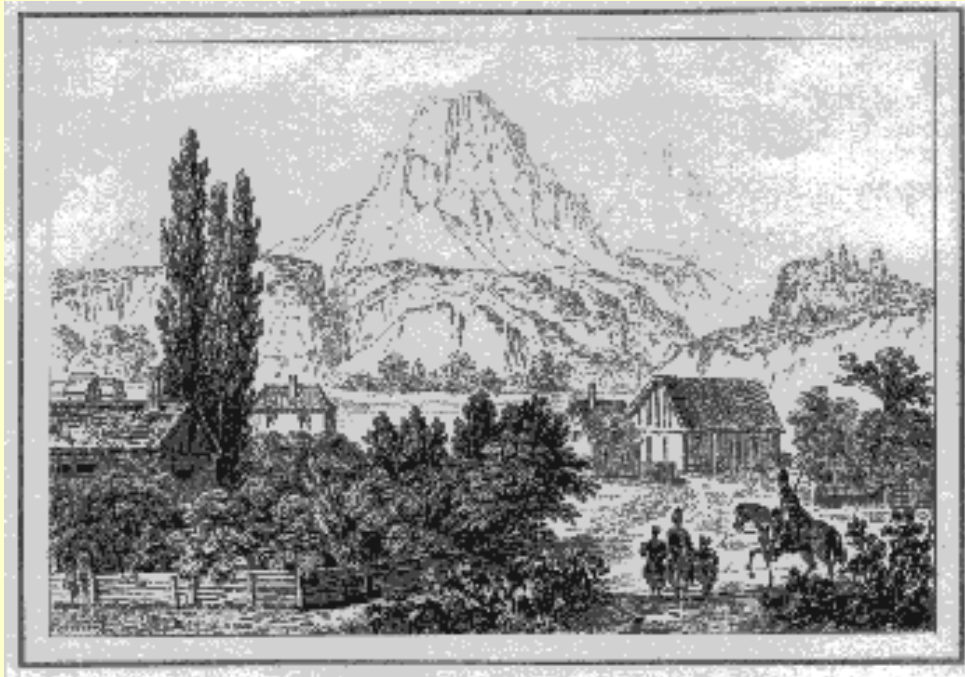


Fig. 9. Colonial representation. Circassian gardens and *Rocher de Prométhée*. Anonyme engraving of the XIXth century.

2. Invention of the Caucasian landscape (4)



Fig. 10. Drawing of geologist H. Abich of the Baksan glacier evolution between 1849 and 1874.

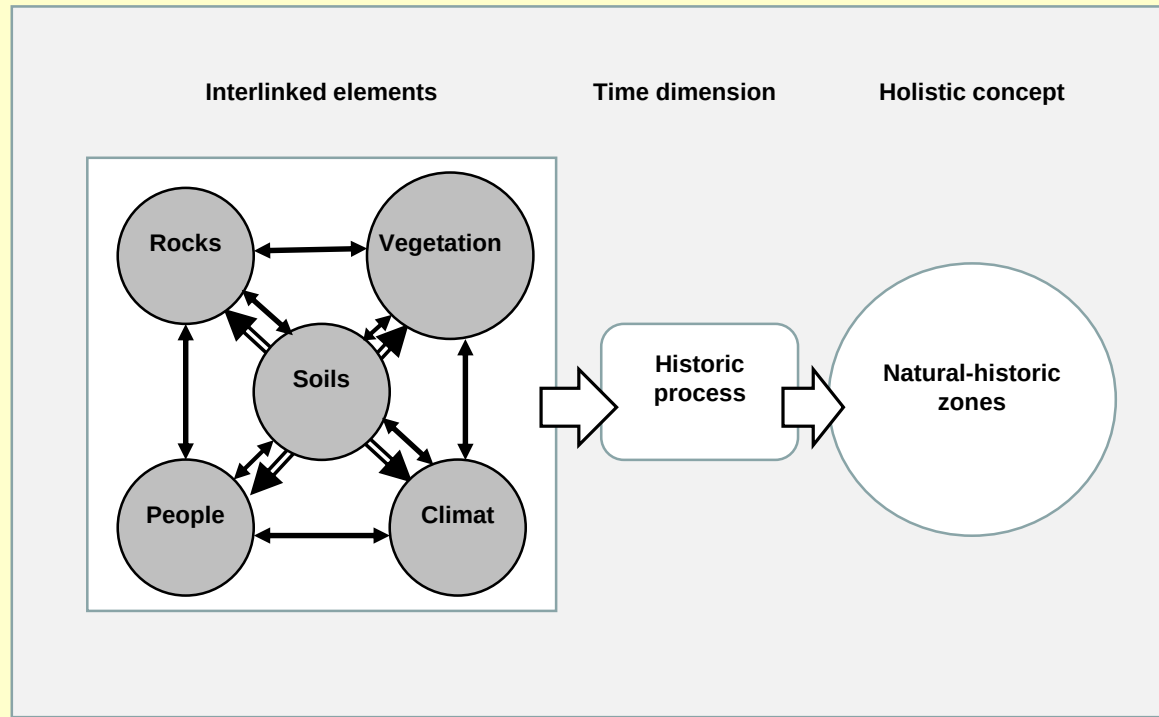


Fig. 11. Integrative approach of V.V. Dokuchaev (1899,1948)

V.V. Dokuchaev, 1899, p.19:

[...] the Caucasus is a classical country for studying interconnections between organic and inorganic nature, between soil and water on one side, and between vegetation and animals on the other side.

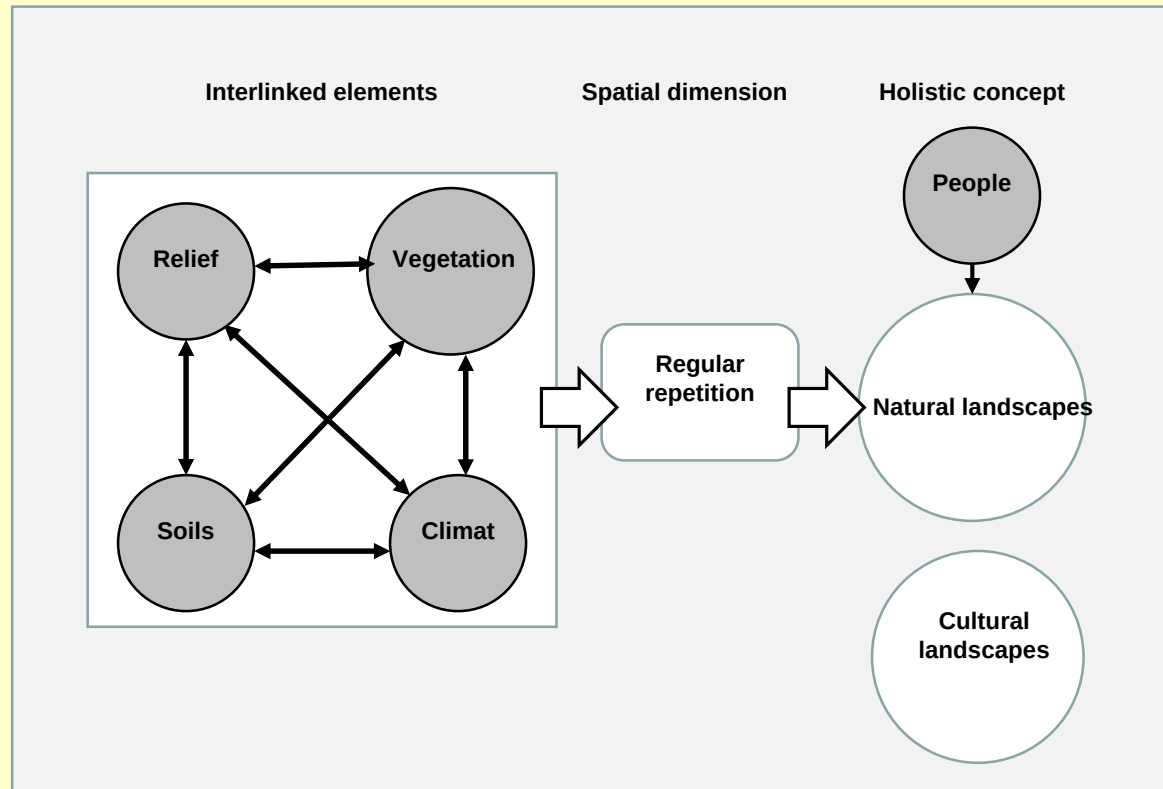


Fig. 12. Landscape, according to L.S. Berg (1930, 1931)

L.S. Berg's definition

A geographical landscape is that combination or grouping of objects and phenomena in which the peculiarities of relief, climate, water, soils, vegetation and fauna, and to a certain degree human activity, blend into a single harmonious whole, typically repeated over the extend of the given zone of the earth (Berg, 1947).

3. Landscape without people

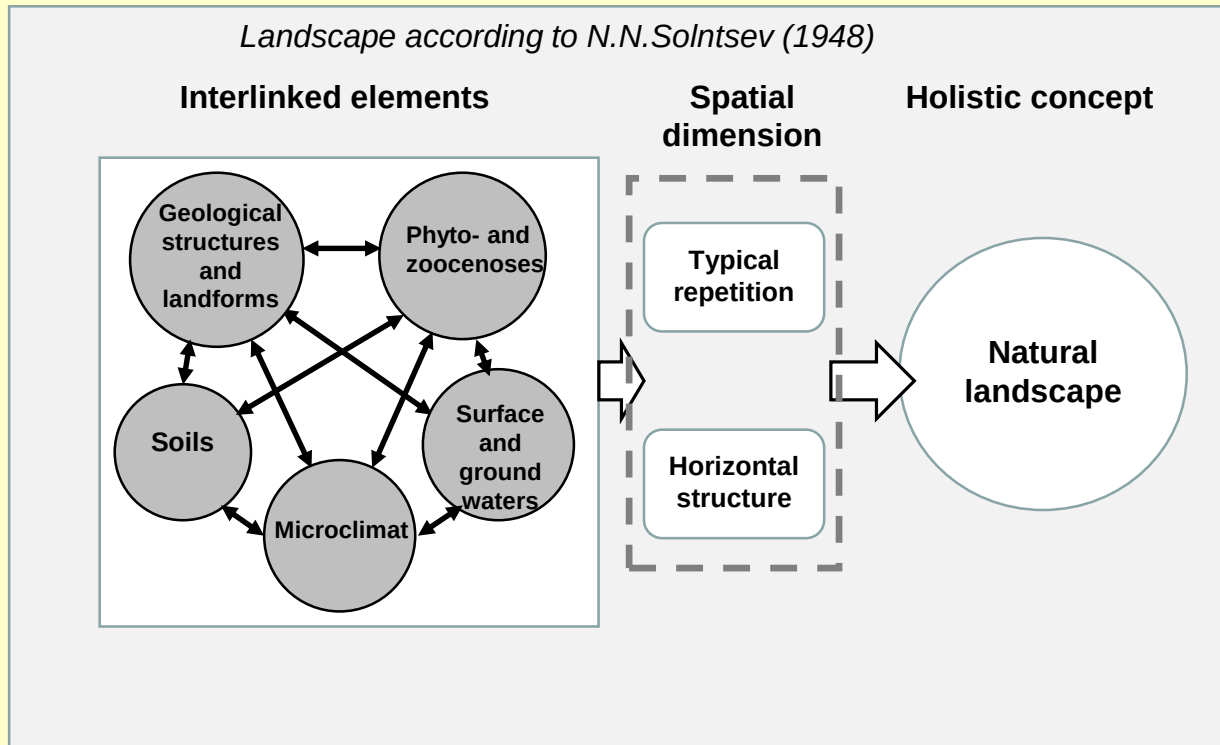


Fig. 13. Landscape, according to N.N.Solntsev (1948)

Solntsev definition of landscape: a “genetically uniform territory, with regular and typical repetition of some interrelated combinations of geological structures, landforms, surface and groundwater, microclimates, soil types, phytocoenoses and zoocoenoses” (Solntsev 1948).

Each landscape unit is made up of different morphological parts: *facies* (elementary natural territorial complex), *podurochishche* (spatial combination of *facies*), *urochishche* (series of genetically and dynamically linked *facies* and *podurochishchye*), *mestnost'* (a part of a landscape with a certain combination of main *urochishchya*). At the same time, landscape is just one part of the higher scale taxonomic units (regional or planetary) in which landscape is individualized by differentiation criteria.

4. Paradigm shift: the geosystem theory

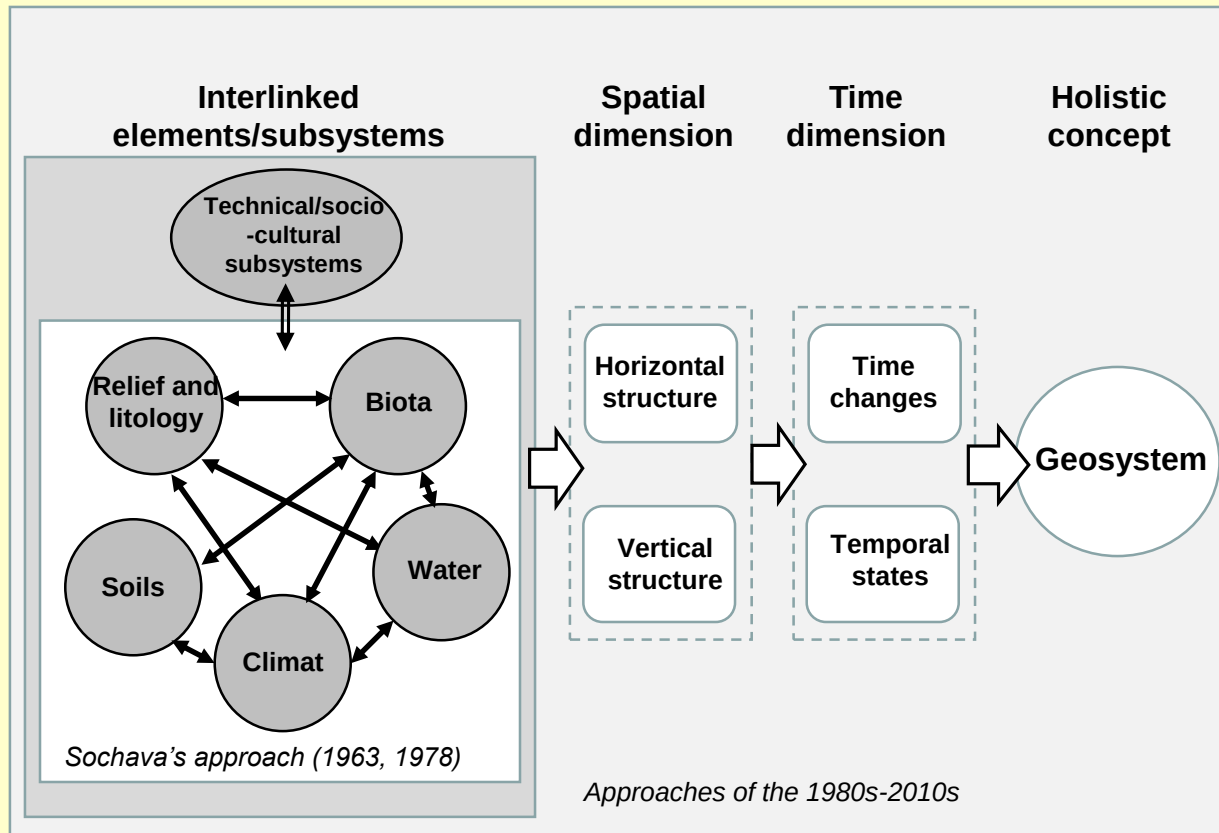


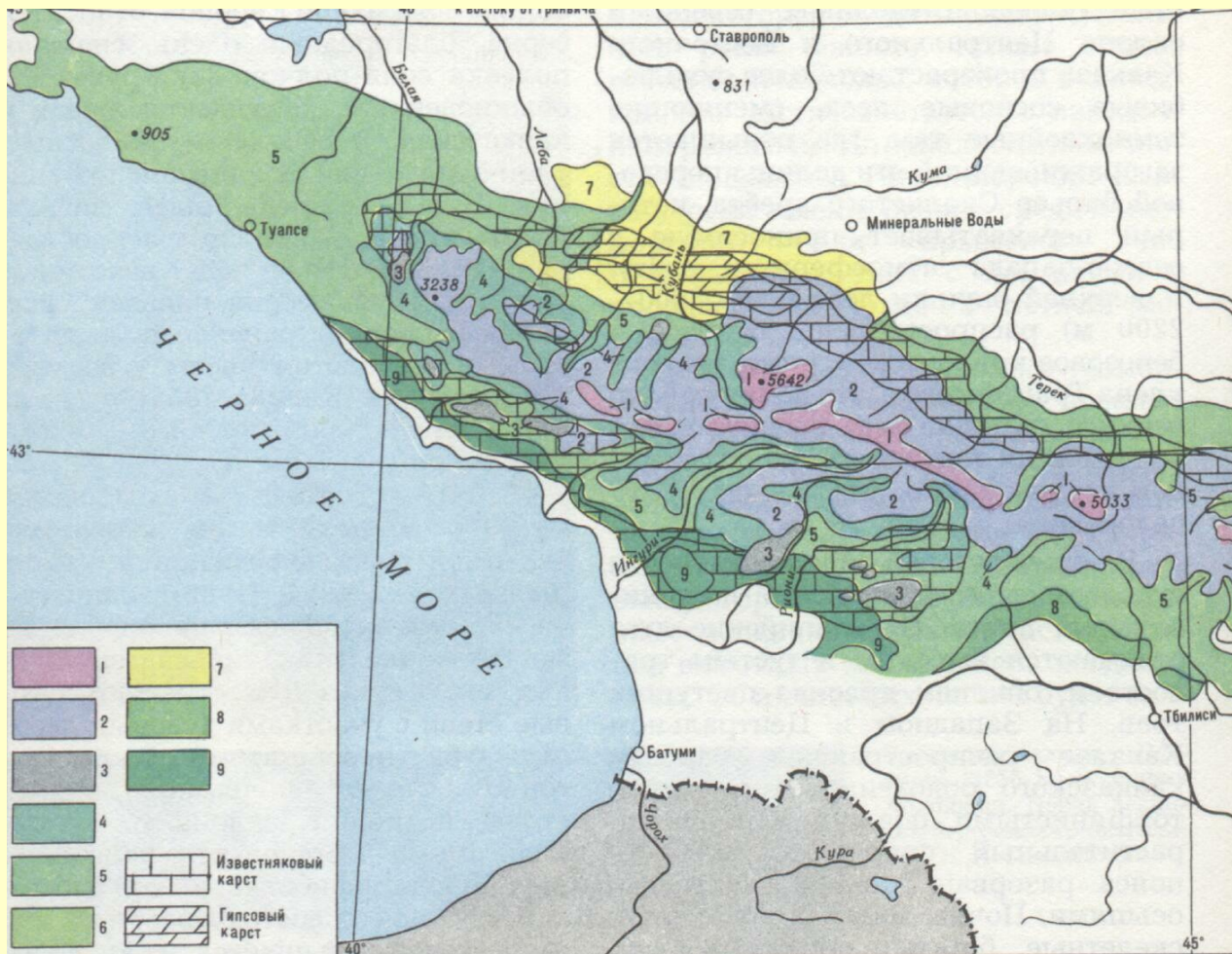
Fig. 14. Geosystem approach

Sochava defined geosystems as “terrestrial spaces of varying dimensions (ranging from the geographical environment as a whole to an elementary physical-geographical geofacies), where the individual components of nature are in a system connection with one another and as a definite entirety, interacting with the cosmic sphere and with human society” (Sochava 1963, 1978).

The geosystem is characterized by:

- its morphology, i.e. its vertical (geohorizon) and horizontal (geofacies) spatial structures
- its dynamics, which cover the whole set of transformations linked to solar or gravitational energy, the cycles of water, the bio-cycles, the movements of air masses and the geo-morphogenetic processes
- specific changes in its functioning, in other words, an analysis of the changes in state that affect the geosystem within a particular time sequence (Beroutchachvili and Bertrand 1978; Beruchashvili 1983, 1986).

Introduction of some anthropic characteristics in landscape representations in Soviet landscape maps



Legend

High mountain landscapes :
1 – glacial-nival; 2 – alpine meadows with rocks; 3 –karst.

Medium mountain landscapes :
4 – mixed and coniferous forests; 5 – broadleaf forests; 6 – steppe alternant with xerophyte forests, bushes and prairie; 7 – steppe.

Low mountain landscapes :
8 – dry subtropical forests; 9 – wet subtropical forests, **with subtropical cultures in foothills.**

Fig 13. Fragment of the *Landscape map of the Greater Caucasus* (central and occidental parts). Gvozdetki, 1986

Conclusion

The limitations of the Russian landscape tradition's view of the Caucasus became evident at the end of the XXth century,

Landscape units established in the XXth century are not able any more to personify the idea of its geographical and cultural unity of the Caucasus.

Lack of adaptation of territory policies to regional cultures.

In the XXI century the landscape visions of the Caucasus became more divers and plural.

The European Landscape Convention signed and ratified by all the Caucasian countries except Russia (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) between 2003 and 2011 defines landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”.

The success of the shift from the determinist and materialist Russian Geographers' landscape representation of the Caucasus influenced by the colonisation process to more democratic landscape vision will depends on the enrichment of the scientific models of the Caucasian landscape with cultural elements.

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A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a vast valley with terraced hills in the foreground. The hills are covered in green and brown vegetation. In the background, a large, snow-capped mountain rises against a clear blue sky. The text "Thank you !" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Thank you !